



MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff



News Release

For Immediate Release

October 26, 2016

Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 or (701) 595-3596

Pictures & video available here: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzEKNLJqG3cwMG4tTllwNI9WcnM>

Sheriff Kirchmeier Requests Removal of Road Block and Protesters on Private Property

Mandan, N.D. — Around 10:30 a.m. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier along with other state and local law enforcement traveled to the illegal road block set up by protesters on Highway 1806. The Sheriff and others asked the individuals involved in securing the illegal blockade to remove the barricade and move off the private property.

"Our message was simple, remove the illegal road block, move off the private property, and return to the camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property. Unfortunately, I am very saddened by the response of the protesters' spokesperson. He repeatedly told our group they we're "not moving" and that they would hold their ground at the north encampment which is on private property," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. "The group wanted to make another effort to engage in a discussion and reach a compromise to avoid any confrontations."

"For months protesters have described us as an aggressive police force. We have done nothing but demonstrate patience and restraint. The last thing we want is a confrontation. We have constantly balanced their right to protest and at the same time enforced laws where criminal acts occur. There have only been confrontations when protesters choose to violate laws when they trespass on private property, damage equipment or assault people," said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney. "We have the resources to respond and clear off the private property being taken over by protesters. But our primary goal was to try to reach a peaceful resolve without a confrontation."

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Sunday, protesters created an illegal road block along Highway 1806 and County Road 134. In addition, protesters trespassed into private property on the east side of highway 1806 and have set up a new camp. This is directly located on the Dakota Access Pipeline right of way on property that is known as "Cannonball Ranch." Numerous teepee's, tents and other structures have been set up and built on the private property since Sunday. In addition, law enforcement has received information that protesters have taken over a shop and old home on the property. This movement is one example of the escalated unlawful behavior of protesters'.

Kirchmeier added, "Protesters' escalated unlawful behavior this weekend of trespassing onto private property and establishing an encampment, has forced law enforcement to respond. I can't stress it enough, this is a public safety issue. We can not have protesters blocking county roads, blocking state highways, or trespassing on private property."

Kirchmeier spoke with Reverend Jesse Jackson this afternoon, he encouraged Reverend Jackson to use his influence to encourage protesters to peacefully and lawfully this includes removing the road block and vacating private property.

Also it's important to note, the FAA has issued a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) from October 25, 2016 (3:00pm) until November 4, 2016 (3:00pm) for Cannonball, ND. The TFR is defined as 7 nautical miles radius. Only relief aircraft operating under direction of the ND Tactical Operation Center (TOC) are authorized in the airspace. This includes the use of drones being used by the protesters.

Highway 1806 continues to be closed between Fort Rice and Cannonball.

Video and pictures from the law enforcement discussion at the road block are available via the links provided at the top of this release.

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